

Idaho Currents

Idaho Sees Drought Emergencies

The Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources has declared drought emergencies this year for 17 Idaho counties and the city of Pierce in Clearwater County as of Aug. 14.

Drought emergency declarations are issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources and approved by the governor. The drought declarations apply only to the administrative processing of water rights. They do not apply to issues such as financial or disaster support.

To be declared a drought emergency, each county's commissioners submit a declaration request to IDWR. The director reviews available hydrologic data and if the data supports a finding of drought conditions, he issues an order declaring a drought emergency for the county or, most recently, a city within the county. The director then submits the declaratory order to the governor for final approval.

Under the declaration, water users in the county work with the IDWR to secure temporary modifications to existing water rights. Drought emergency declarations are effective until Dec. 31, unless extended or terminated by IDWR Director Dave Tuthill.

In addition to the city of Pierce, the governor's office has approved drought emergency declarations for Owyhee, Oneida, Minidoka, Caribou, Bonneville, Bannock, Bingham, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, Teton, Blaine, Fremont, Lemhi, Clark, Custer, and Butte counties.

Although no drought emergencies were declared in 2006, the governor approved 20 emergencies in 2005 between March 28 and June 16.



This photo, taken in April 2007, shows the Big Wood River totally dewatered for irrigation. (Photo by Terry Blau)

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Going Green – As Easy As Recycling

There's been a lot of media attention to Green Energy this year, especially this summer, and most people are willing to help with this effort in some way. No matter what steps each person takes, everything counts. However, it's not necessary to make drastic changes just to help make a difference.

Remember "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"? Whether it's changing all the incandescent light bulbs in your house to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), or even recycling, by just changing a few habits, everything counts. Taking extensive measures, such as installing a wind generator or solar electric panels on your property, can be a costly venture.

The U.S. Green Building Council has listed 16 ways to green your home. Surprisingly, you may already be living greener than you think. Read down the list and see what you are currently doing and what you could do to help make a difference.

Lower your utility bills

1. **Switch to compact fluorescent light bulbs.** CFLs can be a huge energy saver. Replace some or all of your incandescent bulbs with CFLs and enjoy reductions in heat production, energy use, and electric bills.
2. **Program your thermostat.** When you are home, keep the thermostat at 78 degrees F or higher in the summer and about 70 degrees F in the winter. At night and when no one is home during the winter, you can lower the temperature to about 65 degrees F.
3. **Plug air leaks.** This simple step can go a long way toward keeping your home at the temperature you desire, saving money on heating and air conditioning bills and more. Common leaks occur around windows, doors, and other wall penetrations. Plugging those leaks with weather stripping and caulk can be a simple task for anyone.
4. **Choose Energy Star® appliances.** Energy Star qualified products meet a high level of energy efficiency, which can translate into savings on electric bills. When consider-

ing the price of a new appliance, take into account not only the purchase price, but also the long-term savings associated with an energy-efficient appliance.

5. **Tune up your heating and cooling (HVAC) system.** Have a checkup for your HVAC every two years to make sure it is running efficiently. Be sure to clean the filter regularly during times of peak usage; a dirty filter can significantly reduce the efficiency of your HVAC system.
6. **Reduce water use.** Indoor: Use less water by adding aerators (available for a few dollars at your local home supply store) to your sink faucets and changing to low-flow showerheads. Outdoor: Incorporate native plants in your landscape plan and minimize high-maintenance landscaping, such as turf grass to conserve water while still maintaining a beautiful lawn.

Green your lifestyle

7. **Switch to Green Power.** Green Power is an optional utility service for customers who want to help expand the production and distribution of renewable energy technologies. With green power, you do not have to change your electricity provider. Instead, customers choose to pay a premium on their electricity bill to cover the extra cost of purchasing clean, sustainable energy.
8. **Buy local.** Buying local produce reduces the amount of fossil fuels required for the transportation of products from other parts of the country or the world. It also reduces the amount of plastic and paper products consumed in the packaging of such far-traveling products. Buying local reduces consumption of valuable natural resources.
9. **Use low-VOC products.** Improve your indoor air quality by switching to products that don't give off "volatile organic compounds" (VOCs). Some common low-VOC or no-VOC products include paint and cleaning products.

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- 10. Use wood alternatives for FSC-certified wood products.** The type of flooring and cabinetry materials you use can have a positive effect on your health and pocketbook, while reducing your environmental impacts. Consider using environmentally preferable and rapidly renewable products, such as linoleum, bamboo, recycled-content tiles or non-VOC carpet. Use locally sourced products when possible to reduce carbon emissions associated with the transportation of those products.
- 11. Use rapidly renewable flooring materials.** Now there are affordable, durable, and rich looking flooring options made from grasses and trees that mature in roughly half the time (or less) than it takes hardwoods to reach market size. Bamboo, cork and eucalyptus flooring products are a sustainable alternative to traditional hardwoods.

Green your yard

- 12. Plant trees to provide shade and wind protection for your house.** This simple step can help you save money on heating and air conditioning bills while providing beautiful views around your home.
- 13. Use native plants.** Native plants have been growing and evolving in your area for thousands of years and, as a result, have adapted to the local soils and climate. They are more likely to thrive with minimal care, unlike exotic plants, and will need less water, fertilizer and pesticides.
- 14. Use nontoxic gardening techniques.** Many gardeners over-apply or improperly apply pesticides. Check with your local nursery or extension agent before using pesticides.

Green your transportation

- 15. Carpool, walk, bike or ride the bus when possible.** Environmental responsibility doesn't begin and end at your door. Green transportation can greatly reduce your en-

ergy expenditures and carbon emissions from your daily routine.

- 16. Buy a high-efficiency vehicle.** Before purchasing a new vehicle, check the U.S. Department of Energy's list of most fuel-efficient vehicles. The list is updated every year and is available online at www.fueleconomy.gov.

Energy Loans Available

After an exceptionally hot, dry summer, it may seem a little premature to talk about heating your home this winter. However, it's not too early, if you want to take advantage of the Energy Division's low-interest loans to replace an inefficient heating system or upgrade your insulation.

"The Energy Division has provided this loan for more than 20 years, and in that time, homeowners have saved a considerable amount of energy and lowered their utility bills significantly," says Bob Hoppie, Energy Division administrator.

Homeowners can also qualify for federal tax credits if projects meet IRS requirements and are completed by the end of 2007, and may qualify for state income tax deductions.

Loans are available in five sectors: residential, commercial and industrial, agricultural, government, and schools, hospitals and health care facilities at 4 percent interest for five years. Residential loans are available between \$1,000 and \$15,000, while loans in the remaining sectors cap at \$100,000.

Homeowners can also apply for a more efficient water heater and either a wood, pellet or gas stove. Renewable projects, available in all sectors, include solar, wind and geothermal.

To learn more about the program or to request an application, call the Idaho Energy Hotline, **1-800-334-SAVE**. Applications and criteria information are also available on the Energy Division's website at www.energy.idaho.gov.



IDWR Updates GIS Software For Northern Adjudication

In preparation for the North Idaho Adjudication later this year, Idaho Department of Water Resources has purchased new servers and is updating its existing geographic information system (GIS) software.

The move will support IDWR's GIS analysts in the technology and adjudication sections as well as more than 150 department staff who use GIS technology to answer questions, create maps, and identify water use activities.

IDWR has used GIS technology for more than two decades, and now all of the department's business processes use GIS, from filing of water rights and adjudication of water right claims to making high-level water administration decisions based on hydrologic modeling. Most recently, the Adjudication Bureau reviewed 180,000 claims in the Snake River Basin, the largest adjudication in the nation. GIS technology was a key part of that effort.

To prepare for processing approximately 20,000 water rights claims in the North Idaho Adjudication, IDWR is creating an interactive web page planned for 2008 that will allow applicants to file a claim online. The public can access maps and high-resolution aerial photographs to identify their land, then draw their water use and water diversion locations on top of the images.

This outline capability makes it more convenient for applicants and saves time for office staff by increasing the accuracy of the location data that accompanies claims.

FTC Changes Label

Buying big-ticket appliances, such as stoves and refrigerators, can be quite a task. You want to buy one that suits your needs and is energy efficient, but you don't want to pay an arm and a leg in the process.

So how can you tell which appliances will get you the best bang for your buck? Look for the bright yellow **ENERGYGUIDE** label. Produced by the Federal Trade Commission, the EnergyGuide label has been streamlined and will display yearly operating costs prominently for most appliance types, according to the FTC.

This estimated cost information, which will appear on the labels in dollars per year, will provide consumers with a clear context to compare the energy efficiency of different appliance models. Idaho's electric rates are about 6.5 cents per kilowatt hour, depending on your utility company.

The new label will also help consumers assess trade-offs between the energy costs of the appliances and other expenditures. The label design will continue to display energy consumption information (e.g., annual electricity use) as a secondary disclosure for most labeled products.

When shopping for new appliances, look for the Energy Star® label. Energy Star qualified models, including refrigerators, require about half as much energy as models manufactured in the early 1990s, and provide energy savings without sacrificing the features you want.

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2007 Idaho Drought Emergency Declarations

<u>County/Area</u>	<u>Date Declared</u>
Owyhee County	August 13
Preston (city)	August 8
Oneida County	July 24
Minidoka County	July 18
Caribou County	July 12
Bonneville County	July 10
Bannock County	July 10
Bingham County	June 29
Jefferson County	June 29
Lincoln County	June 29
Madison County	June 29
Teton County	June 13
Blaine County	June 6
Fremont County	May 29
Lemhi County	May 15
Clark County	May 15
Custer County	March 15
Butte County	March 12